

VZCZCXYZ0040
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #1251/01 1561741
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 051741Z JUN 06 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4772
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPUA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001251

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION WAR IN IRAQ HADITHA FTAA-MERCOSUR TERRORISM US ECONOMY ARGENTINA'S SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL 06/05/06

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend stories cover the alleged murder of Iraqi civilians in Haditha by a group of US troops; the consequences of the war in Iraq; the US/Latin American relationship; FTAA/Mercosur ties; a group of Canadian residents that were arrested for planning to blow up targets in Ontario; the status of the US economy; and Argentina's support for Venezuela to become a member of the UN Security Council.

Centrist "Perfil" newspaper reports on the Webchat with DUSTR Everett Eissenstat organized by the PAS Section at the US Embassy in Buenos Aires.

12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "With Haditha, the ghost of Vietnam returns to the US"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (06/04) "As multiple denunciations appear on the killing of civilians in Haditha..., the images of another terrible massacre, that of My Lai in Vietnam, slowly and painfully return to the mind. And with them, the idea that history repeats itself appears - innocent blood, cruelty, concealment, impunity and eventually, lack of punishment for those held responsible..."

"It is not so clear yet what happened on November 19, 2005 in Haditha, but everything indicates that it was a horrible massacre just like that of My Lai, although to a lesser extent. Witnesses of the incident said that after having fallen in an ambush, a group of US marines murdered 24 civilians."

- "Haditha's massacre"

Mario Diament, contributor to daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (06/05) "... The circumstances that turn this episode into a paradigmatic case of a terribly wrong war are not merely the count of casualties but the chain of responsibilities.

"Everything indicates that the military high command attempted to wipe the incident in Haditha under the ordinary listing of civil casualties in Iraq."

- "Iraq: consequences of a war without damage control"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (06/03) "... The White House is aware that its only alternative is a way out of Iraq by transferring the scary future of the country to an international organization. This has not happened yet in spite of the efforts made by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who has attempted to make an alliance with European countries, which today is crucial for Washington.

"But if this attempt seems to have an unpredictable result, Washington has been trying to build some bridge to Iran, certain that the Persian theocracy currently has the greatest real influence on Iraq. Actually, war has done nothing but increase Tehran's political power in the region. It is under this light that one should analyze Rice's latest proposal that the USG should hold direct negotiations with the Iranian government. However, it is a 'lame' attempt because of the US impossibility to renounce its demand for Iraq to abandon its nuclear plan."

- "Northern misconduct"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" carries an op-ed piece by contributor Norberto Firpo, who writes (06/03) "Woodrow Peribaez, one of US President Bush's advisors on Latin American affairs, takes four Prozac per day..."

"The reason is that the White House handles Latin American affairs with the expertise and subtlety of Steven Spielberg's dinosaurs at a bazaar.

"According to Peribaez, 'without having made a point

of it, Bush has managed to make rebel politicians proliferate in our hemisphere's backyard to make public their anti-US feeling... Chattering Venezuelan Hugo Chávez has become an authoritative voice in the region, and even Mexican Vicente Fox, formerly a friend, got angry because we have built a bordering wall, which is seen as a sign of discord.'

- "The US wants to include Mercosur in FTAA negotiations"

Lucas Morando, columnist of centrist "Perfil" newspaper, writes (06/04) "Seven months after the Mar del Plata SOA, in which the FTAA project showed signs of weakness and entered an impasse, the USG insists now on resuming talks among the 34 countries of the hemisphere.

"During a Webchat organized by the USG for the journalists of the region, USTR Everett Eissenstat was the last USG official in charge of conveying this message. Asked by 'Perfil' newspaper, he said the USG 'looks forward to start discussing the road to the FTAA with every country of the region, including Argentina and Brazil.'

"... In spite of this explicit willingness of the USG to put the FTAA on a safe track again, the four Mercosur countries and Venezuela, which refused to make progress on FTAA negotiations, still hold this position and are expecting the outcome of the Doha multilateral meeting.

"According to an Argentine official source, if, in this context, countries do not show a flexible attitude regarding the reduction or removal of farm subsidies, the region will not make progress on FTAA discussions."

- "No terrorist conspiracy"

Gwynne Dyer, contributor to liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (06/05) "They arrested seventeen alleged Islamist terrorists in and around Toronto on Saturday, most of them young and Canadian-born..."

".... Any terrorist attack on Canada is bound to be home-grown, because there is no shadowy but powerful network of international Islamist terrorists waging a war against the West. There are isolated small groups of extremists who blow things up once in a while, and there are Web sites and other media through which they can exchange ideas and techniques, but there is no headquarters, no chain of command, no organization that can be defeated, dismantled and destroyed."

- "The US, focus of globalization"

Centrist "Perfil" newspaper carries an opinion piece by Jorge Castro, political analyst, who writes (06/04) "The engine of the overall boom in the world economy is the US economic impetus. The US economy has grown at a vibrant pace of 5.3% in the first three months of the year, the highest point during the last two and a half years.

"Most analysts predict that there will be a new correction of this percentage, which will bring the growth rate of the first quarter beyond 6% per year. The reason for this optimism is an unexpected reduction in the US trade deficit... plus a more significant reduction of its fiscal deficit..."

"The US economic cycle determines that of the world economy and the pace of its growth sets that of the entire world economy. Under these circumstances, globalization is still an essentially American phenomenon, which has opened to the emerging world (Asia-Pacific Ocean/China) during the last 15 years.

"In brief, globalization is today a global phenomenon rooted in the US. This is precisely the view of the Chinese government. According to May 26 Beijing's *Newspaper of the People's* editorial (official

newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party)... 'If one judges from the point of view of world macroeconomic balance, under globalization, the huge US trading deficit means that gigantic savings of the entire world are used by the US economy.'

".... The paper underscores that 'the world is divided into two sectors - one, the US, with its gigantic trading deficit, and the other, the rest of the world, which contributes its savings to it.'"

- "Argentina will support Venezuela at the UN"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" (06/05) reports "(Argentine) Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana confirmed that Argentina will support Venezuela's candidacy to become a member of the strategic UN Security Council.

".... Argentina supported Hugo Chavez's aspirations in spite of US pressures for the region to choose Guatemala and, particularly, to prevent the Venezuelan president from becoming a member of the UN Security Council, which has to make crucial international policy decisions."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sqov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>